

Incorporating input from all shifts to improve patient care

Shared governance in nursing is a cornerstone of Magnet® designated hospitals, though Washington Hospital implemented its shared governance model in 1991, long before we achieved Magnet status. Shared governance promotes accountability and responsibility within the nursing practice. Nurses are empowered to provide input and make decisions regarding patient care at the bedside. Our shared governance framework has historically included six councils: Coordinating, Administrative, Clinical Innovation & Technology, Education, Quality & Research, and Professional Engagement.

In 2018, we added the Night Shift Council to our shared governance model. This new council recognizes the unique differences in patient care during night shifts and the high value we place on input from our night shift nurses. The theme of this council is, “The Stars Come Out at Night.” The goal

is to increase communication, professional practice involvement and direct access to nursing leadership for night shift nurses. The council — made up of charge nurses, bedside nurses, and members of the nursing leadership team — meets during the night shift every other month to address nighttime nursing-related concerns.

Patient visitation at night is one example. Night Shift Council members discussed how the Hospital’s visitation policy was interpreted during the night shift and expressed concern that visitors did not understand the policy. The group submitted suggested revisions for the visitor brochure regarding such policies as visitation hours, the presence of children, and resources available for visitors during nighttime hours. The revisions were incorporated into a new visitor handbook which is now available at Hospital entrances.



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